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THOSE WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN

José Dias, 2017

ENG/PT, 17'

INET-md, MMU

Link: <https://vimeo.com/223160258>

Shot in Lisbon in early 2016, during Festa do Jazz – the largest Portuguese jazz festival, which, for four days, comprises around 50 concerts as well as a national competition for jazz schools each year since 2002 – 'Those Who Make It Happen' (TWMIT) features the testimonies of musicians, promoters and researchers who think about jazz in Portugal and Europe in its artistic, pedagogical, performative, social and political dimensions. The film trails and captures the dynamics around the initiative 'Researchers in Residence', a collaboration between five UK and Portuguese universities, which consisted in panel talks, debates and networking between European academic music researchers and different audiences (concert goers, musicians, promoters, etc.).

Jazz is often portrayed as a pantheon of heroes who stand out as extraordinary individual artists. TWMIT challenges this traditional concept and observes the phenomenon of Portuguese and European jazz as the result of a collective effort and commitment that mobilises not only artists, but also promoters, associations, audiences, researchers and a multitude of different agents. Without them – without all those who make it happen – jazz, music, art would not exist.

Having a jazz festival as backdrop, the short documentary film captures a turning point in both Portuguese society and European arts and humanities research. After a period of economic uncertainty, Portugal is living a new momentum of self-confidence and international affirmation through the Arts, whilst questioning the boundaries between personal, national and Pan-European identities. At the same time, academic research on arts and humanities is increasing its commitment to bridge the gap between university and society, by engaging in a new paradigm of collaborative work, where all partners are assumed as crucial actors in the process of exchanging and building knowledge. TWMIT is also a documentary on how that work has become crucial in terms of decision support, assessing challenges, suggesting strategies and setting agendas for the future of arts and humanities. The film has been screened in international jazz festivals and conferences across Europe and has contributed to the creation of the first ever national jazz network in Portugal.